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The System Bytes™

Part 1

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THE PUNISHER®

PACELLA
PANOSIAN
3-20-92

The System Bytes™

Part 1

FEATURING:

THE PUNISHER

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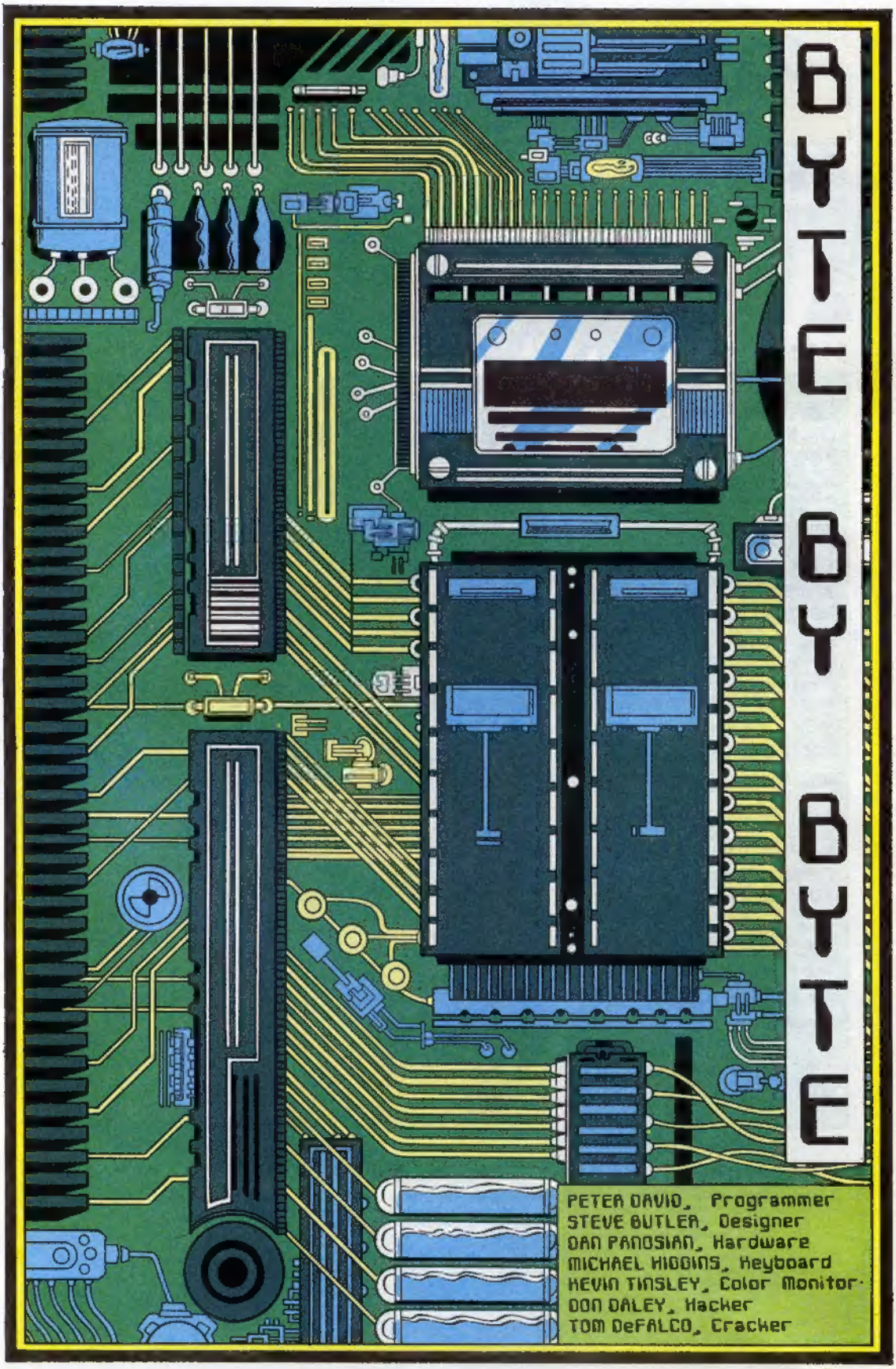
BYTE BY BYTE
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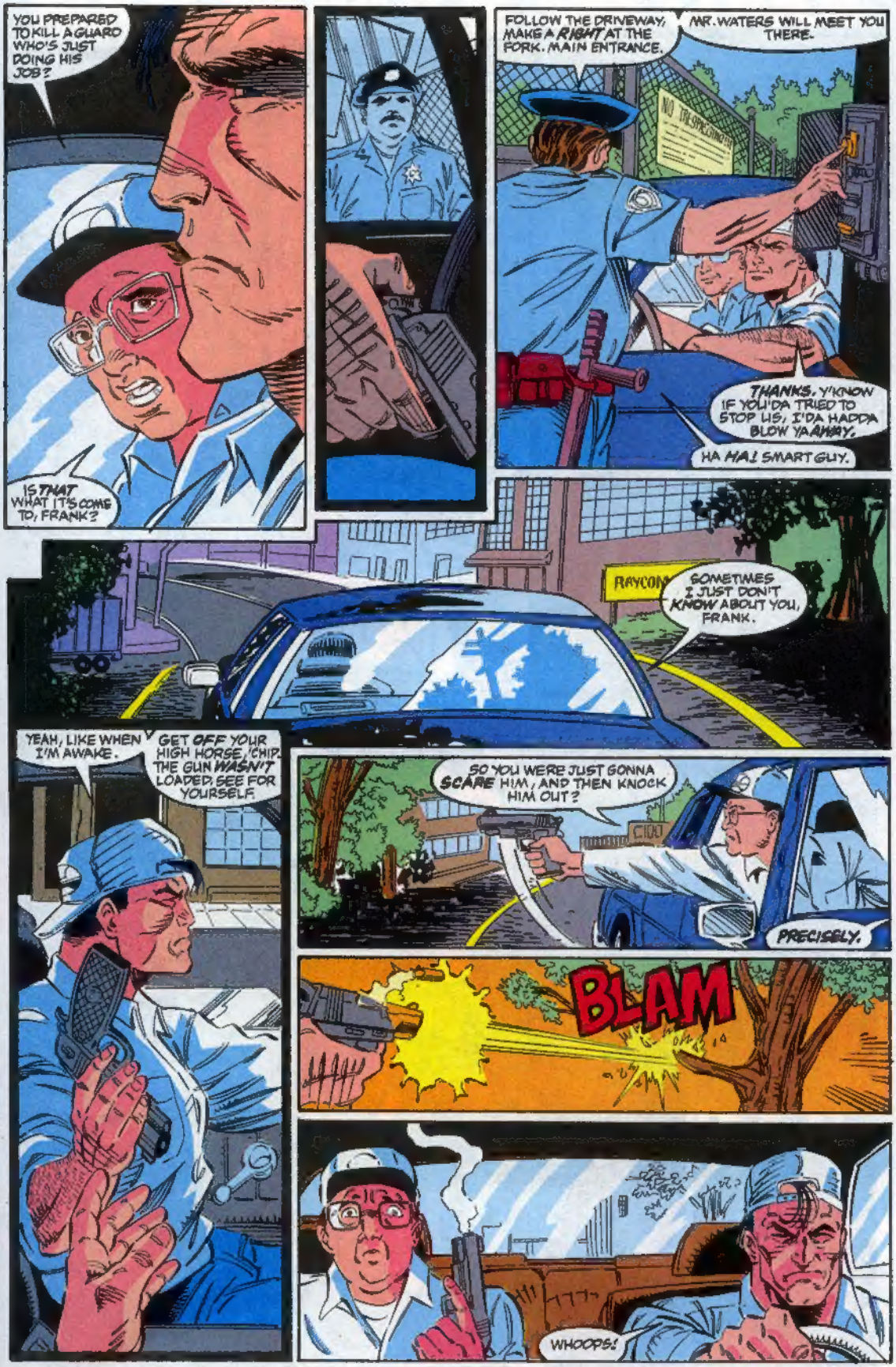
STEVE BUTLER, Designer
DAN PANOSIAN, Hardware
MICHAEL HIGGINS, Keyboard
KEVIN TINSLEY, Color Monitor
DON DALEY, Hacker
TOM DeFALCO, Cracker

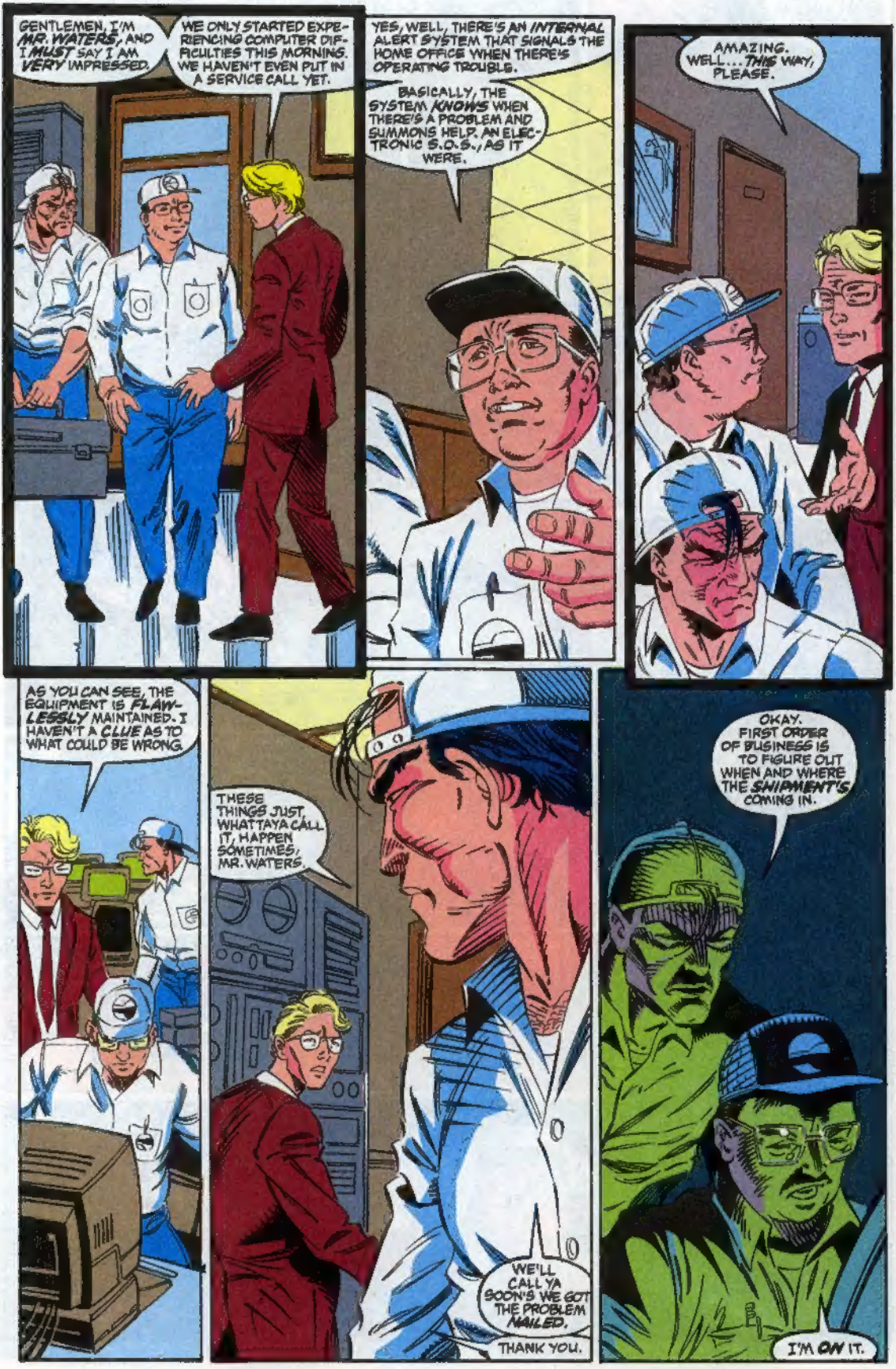
AW, MAN, I DON'T BELIEVE TH--
NUTS!
THIS STINKS. THIS ABSOLUTELY BITES IT.
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM, MICROCHIP? NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE YOU ABUSING HARDWARE THAT WAY.
THIS ISN'T HARDWARE ANYMORE, FRANK. TAKING ALL THE SYSTEMS THAT MAKE UP THIS PACKAGE...
WHAT WE GOT HERE IS A $6000 PAPERWEIGHT.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. ALL I ASKED YOU TO DO WAS ACCESS THE DATA-BANKS OF RAYCOM INDUSTRIES.
I KNOW THAT THEY'RE A FRONT FOR DRUG SMUGGLERS. I KNOW THAT THEY HAVE A SHIPMENT COMING IN WITHIN THE NEXT 48 HOURS, BUT WHAT I DON'T KNOW IS HOW -- TRUCK, BOAT, WHATEVER.
HOW DIFFICULT COULD IT BE TO FIND THEIR SHIPPING MANIFESTS?
YOU'RE SUCH AN EXPERT, FRANK? YOU DO IT!
WHAT, IF YOU CAN'T GO AROUND SHOOTING OFF YOUR GUNS, YOU SHOOT OFF YOUR MOUTH?
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. I'M SORRY IF I'M ANNOYING SOMETIMES.
YEAH, LIKE WHEN YOU'RE AWAKE.
YOU WANT TO SEE THE PROBLEM? LOOK FOR YOURSELF.
I DON'T GET IT. THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE?
ALL WORK AND NO PLAY MAKES MAX A DULL BOY

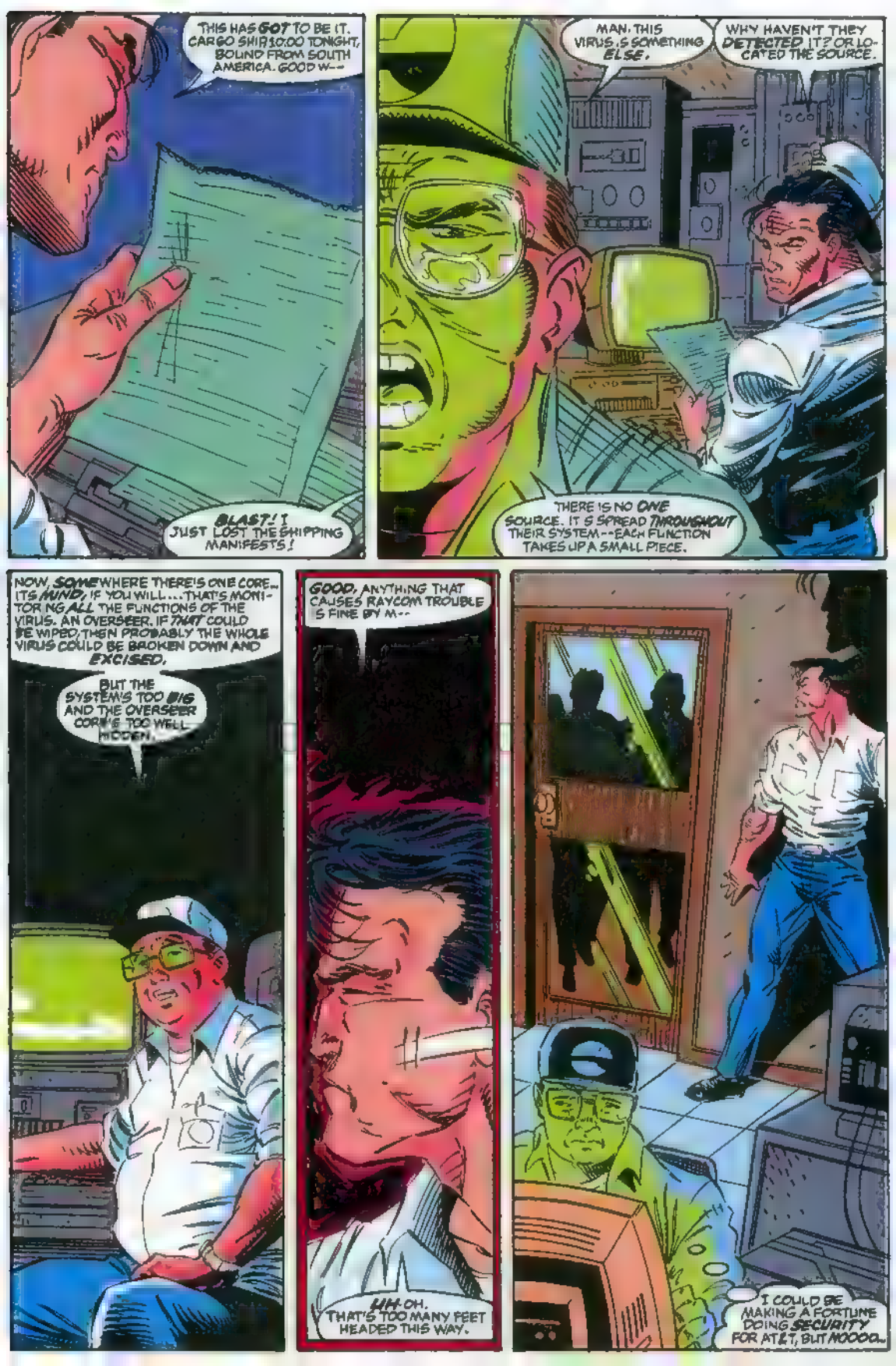
RAYCOM HAS BIGGER PROBLEMS THAN JUST HAVING YOU ON THEIR TAIL. AS NEAR AS I CAN TELL, THEY'VE GOT A VIRUS IN THEIR SYSTEM. THEY MAY NOT EVEN KNOW IT YET. I STUMBLED ACROSS IT BECAUSE I USED A BACKDOOR CODE TO GET IN.
YOU'RE LOSING ME. PUT IT IN ENGLISH.
OKAY, LOOK. A COMPUTER VIRUS IS REALLY VERY SIMPLE. IT'S A PROGRAM THAT'S INTRODUCED INTO A SYSTEM AND IT'S DESIGNED TO DO ONE THING: DUPLICATE ITSELF. JUST DUPE AND DUPE AND DUPE.
THE THING IS, IT STARTS OUT SMALL, SO NO ONE NOTICES THAT IT'S THERE.
AS IT GROWS--AS IT CONTINUES TO DUPLICATE ITSELF--IT STARTS EATING UP THE MEMORY IN THE SYSTEM. AT FIRST IT CONSUMES THE FREE MEMORY, AND AS IT CONTINUES TO GROW, IT STARTS DRAWING MEMORY OFF FROM OTHER FUNCTIONS AS WELL.
LIKE CANCER CELLS PUSHING OUT HEALTHY CELLS.
EXACTLY. AND EVENTUALLY ALL THE FUNCTIONS OF THE SYSTEM ARE GEARED AROUND REPLICATING THIS VIRUS UNTIL IT TAKES UP THE MEMORY BASE, AT WHICH POINT YOUR SYSTEM CRASHES.
AND THIS THING IS IN RAYCOM'S COMPUTER?
YEAH, AND NOW IT'S IN THIS ONE, TOO. WHOEVER INTRODUCED IT INTO THE RAYCOM SYSTEM MUST HAVE USED A BACKDOOR CODE. BASICALLY YOU TRICK THE SYSTEM INTO TELLING YOU SOMEONE'S PASSWORD AND GAIN ACCESS THAT WAY. THAT'S HOW I GOT IN--AND THAT'S HOW MY SYSTEM WOUND UP PICKING UP THE VIRUS THAT'S ALREADY IN THE RAYCOM SYSTEM.
WHAT THIS MEANS IS THAT SOMEONE ELSE IS OUT TO GET RAYCOM, TOO, AND THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING TO RISK ANOTHER OF MY OWN OPERATING SYSTEMS TO TRY TO BREAK INTO THEIRS AGAIN. NOT UNTIL I KNOW WHAT I'M UP AGAINST.
THEN WE'LL JUST HAVE TO GET INTO THEIR SYSTEM ON-SITE.
HOW THE HECK ARE WE GOING TO DO THAT?
TACT.

PLEASE BRING YOUR CAR TO A COMPLETE STOP. THESE ARE PRIVATE FACILITIES OWNED BY RAYCOM INDUSTRIES.
STATE YOUR BUSINESS.
HI. WE'RE, WHATTAYA CALL IT, THE PROS FROM DOVER.
PARDON?
THE COMPUTER REPAIR GUYS, YA GOTTA KNOW WE'RE EXPECTED.
CAN'T SAY THAT I DO.
WELL, THIS IS JUST GREAT. WE HAUL OUR BUTTS OVER HERE, AND WHATTAYA TELL US? YA DON'T WANT US HERE?
OKAY, FINE. YA WANT BUSTED HARDWARE, YA GOT BUSTED HARDWARE. AIN'T NO SKIN OFF MY NOSE. WE'RE OUTTA HERE.
OKAY, WAIT. LET ME CALL UP TO THE FRONT OFFICE AND CHECK THIS OUT.
YEAH. YOU DO THAT.


YOU PREPARED TO KILL A GUARD WHO'S JUST DOING HIS JOB?
IS THAT WHAT IT'S COME TO, FRANK?
FOLLOW THE DRIVEWAY. MAKE A RIGHT AT THE FORK. MAIN ENTRANCE.
MR. WATERS WILL MEET YOU THERE.
NO TRESPASSING
THANKS. Y'KNOW IF YOU'DA TRIED TO STOP US, I'DA HADDA BLOW YA AWAY.
HA HA! SMART GUY.
RAYCOM
SOMETIMES I JUST DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, FRANK.
YEAH, LIKE WHEN I'M AWAKE.
GET OFF YOUR HIGH HORSE, CHIP. THE GUN WASN'T LOADED. SEE FOR YOURSELF.
SO YOU WERE JUST GONNA SCARE HIM, AND THEN KNOCK HIM OUT?
PRECISELY.
BLAM
WHOOPS!

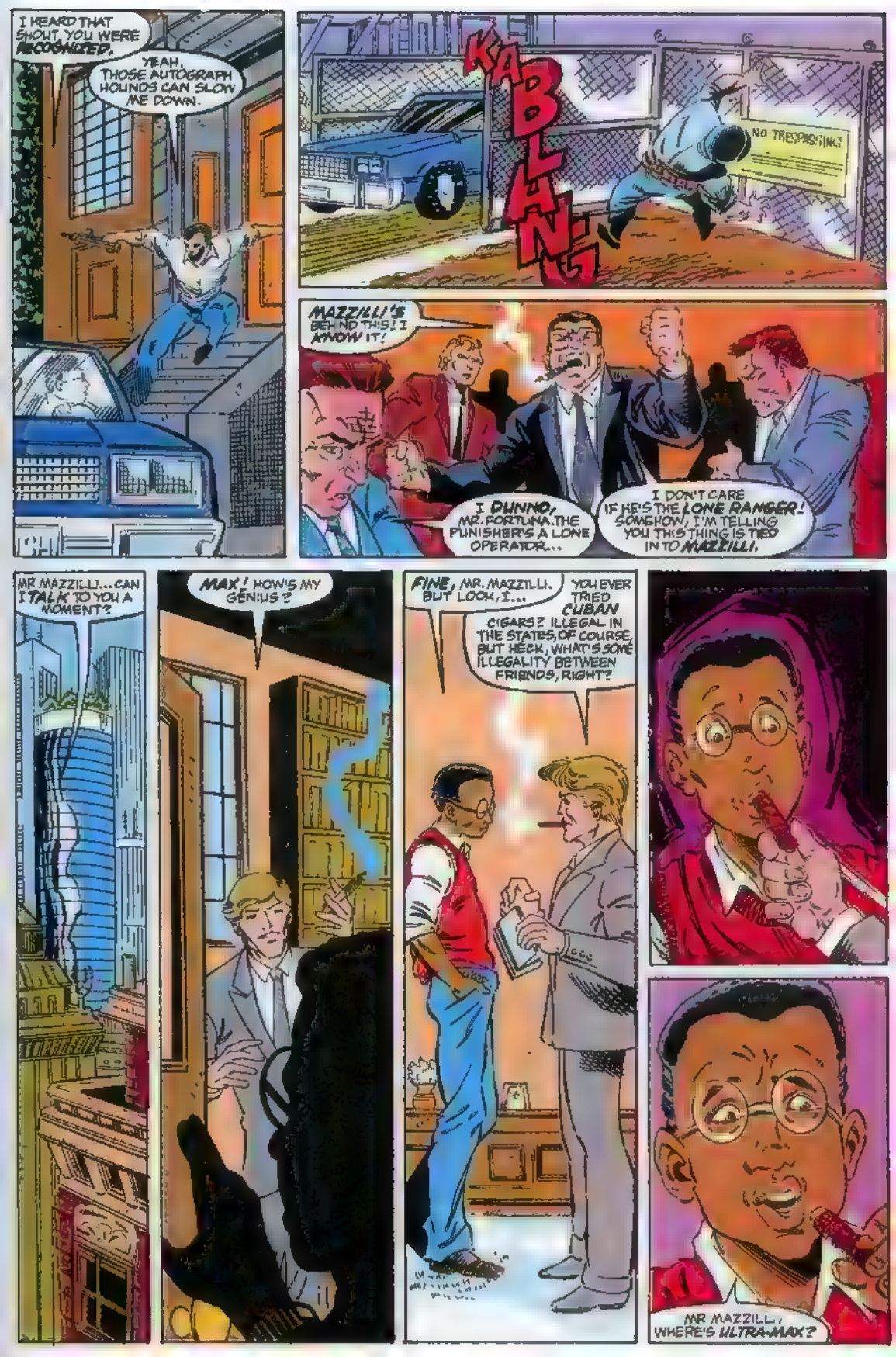

GENTLEMEN, I'M MR. WATERS, AND I MUST SAY I AM VERY IMPRESSED.
WE ONLY STARTED EXPERIENCING COMPUTER DIFFICULTIES THIS MORNING. WE HAVEN'T EVEN PUT IN A SERVICE CALL YET.
YES, WELL, THERE'S AN INTERNAL ALERT SYSTEM THAT SIGNALS THE HOME OFFICE WHEN THERE'S OPERATING TROUBLE.
BASICALLY, THE SYSTEM KNOWS WHEN THERE'S A PROBLEM AND SUMMONS HELP, AN ELECTRONIC S.O.S., AS IT WERE.
AMAZING. WELL... THIS WAY, PLEASE.
AS YOU CAN SEE, THE EQUIPMENT IS FLAWLESSLY MAINTAINED. I HAVEN'T A CLUE AS TO WHAT COULD BE WRONG.
THESE THINGS JUST WHATTAYA CALL IT, HAPPEN SOMETIMES, MR. WATERS.
WE'LL CALL YA SOON'S WE GOT THE PROBLEM NAILED.
THANK YOU.
OKAY. FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS IS TO FIGURE OUT WHEN AND WHERE THE SHIPMENT'S COMING IN.
I'M ON IT.

RAY FORTUNA
PRESIDENT
MR. FORTUNA?
JUST THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW: THOSE COMPUTER GLITCHES I REPORTED THIS MORNING? WELL, THE COMPUTER COMPANY AUTOMATICALLY SENT REPAIRMEN OVER. WE SHOULD HAVE IT ATTENDED TO IN NO TIME.
GET IN HERE!
YES, SIR?
YOU SAYING THE COMPANY SENT SOMEONE OVER WITHOUT OUR CALLING
THAT'S RIGHT, SIR. THEY SAID THERE'S A--
I DON'T CARE WHAT THEY SAID THERE IS. CALL THE COMPANY AND MAKE BLASTED SURE THEY'RE WHO THEY SAY THEY ARE.
THIS COULD BE SOME STUNT ON MAZZILLI'S PART. THAT LITTLE CREEP'S OUT TO GET ME. I WOULDN'T PUT ANYTHING PAST HIM.
OF COURSE I'LL CALL, SIR. AND, UHM...
IF THEY AREN'T LEGITIMATE?
DEAL WITH IT.

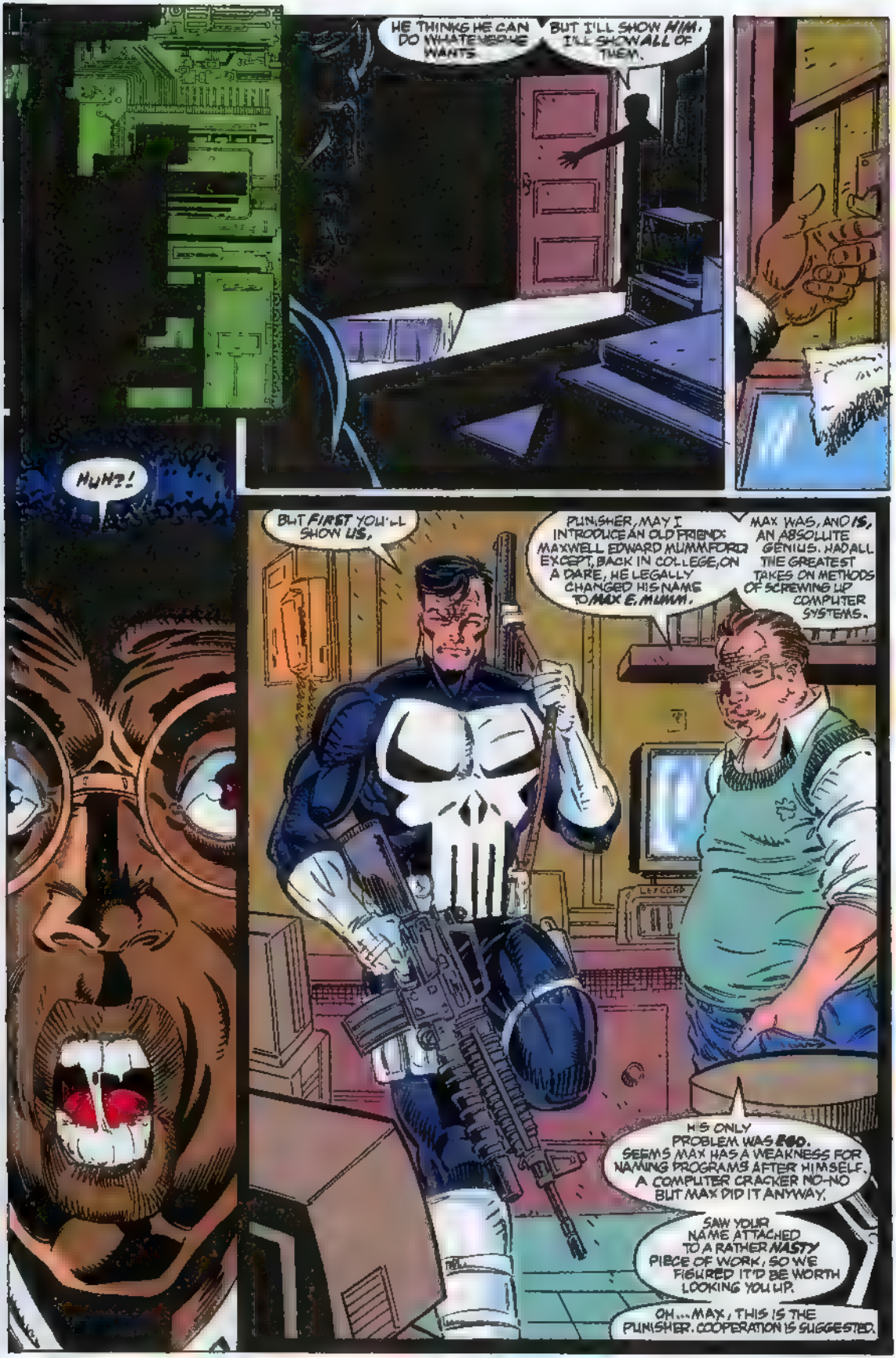

THIS HAS GOT TO BE IT. CARGO SHIP 10:00 TONIGHT, BOUND FROM SOUTH AMERICA. GOOD W--
BLAST! I JUST LOST THE SHIPPING MANIFESTS!
MAN, THIS VIRUS IS SOMETHING ELSE.
WHY HAVEN'T THEY DETECTED IT? OR LOCATED THE SOURCE.
THERE IS NO ONE SOURCE. IT IS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THEIR SYSTEM--EACH FUNCTION TAKES UP A SMALL PIECE.
NOW, SOMEWHERE THERE'S ONE CORE... IT'S MIND, IF YOU WILL... THAT'S MONITORING ALL THE FUNCTIONS OF THE VIRUS. AN OVERSEER. IF THAT COULD BE WIPED, THEN PROBABLY THE WHOLE VIRUS COULD BE BROKEN DOWN AND EXCISED.
BUT THE SYSTEM'S TOO BIG AND THE OVERSEER CORE IS TOO WELL HIDDEN.
GOOD, ANYTHING THAT CAUSES RAYCOM TROUBLE IS FINE BY M--
HM-OH. THAT'S TOO MANY FEET HEADED THIS WAY.
I COULD BE MAKING A FORTUNE DOING SECURITY FOR AT&T, BUT MOOOO...

ALL RIGHT. DON'T MOVE.
WHY SHOULD I GO ANYWHERE? I JUST FOUND YOUR PROBLEM. THERE'S A VIRUS IN--
SHUT UP! YOU'RE NOT FROM THE COMPUTER COMPANY.
WHO ARE YOU?
WE'RE WATCH-MAKERS.
WE'RE HERE TO CLEAN YOUR PROBLEM.
KRUNK
ARRHHHH!!
MR. WATERS, YOU'RE IN THE WAY! SHOULD WE WAIT UNTIL WE GET CLEAR, OR JUST START FIRING,
ARRHH-- YES!
I MEAN YES, WAIT UNTIL I'M CLEAR!!! NOT YES, START--
DON'T DO ANYTHING!!
YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!!
NOW HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I HEARD THAT BEFORE?
HERE, CATCH! YOU KNOW I HATE TO POINT THIS OUT BUT OUR SITUATION IS NOT ESPECIALLY PROMISING.
NO PROBLEM
LISTEN CAREFULLY. YOU EVER HEAR OF IMPROVISATIONAL THEATER?
WELL WE'RE GOING TO IMPROVISE RIGHT NOW, AND YOU, AN AUDIENCE MEMBER, ARE GOING TO HELP.

BAM
OKAY, BOYS. STAY WHERE YOU ARE, OR WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT IF BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATERS.
WHAT THE DEVIL IS HAPPENING OUT HERE?!
A CRAZY MAN IS THREATENING MR. WATERS, AND NO ONE CAN GET NEAR HIM!
IS THAT ALL?!
GIMME THAT!
BLAM
CHOOF
CHOOF
CHOOF
SOME OF YOU SAW THAT!
NOW GET THAT GUY!!
HOLY CROW! I RECOGNIZE HIM!
IT'S THE PUNISHER!


I HEARD THAT SHOUT. YOU WERE RECOGNIZED.
YEAH. THOSE AUTOGRAPH HOUNDS CAN SLOW ME DOWN.
KABLANG
NO TRESPASSING
MAZZILLI'S BEHIND THIS! I KNOW IT!
I DUNNO, MR. FORTUNA. THE PUNISHER'S A LONE OPERATOR...
I DON'T CARE IF HE'S THE LONE RANGER! SOMEHOW, I'M TELLING YOU THIS THING IS TIED IN TO MAZZILLI.
MR MAZZILLI... CAN I TALK TO YOU A MOMENT?
MAX! HOW'S MY GENIUS?
FINE, MR. MAZZILLI. BUT LOOK, I...
YOU EVER TRIED CUBAN CIGARS? ILLEGAL IN THE STATES, OF COURSE, BUT HECK, WHAT'S SOME ILLEGALITY BETWEEN FRIENDS, RIGHT?
MR MAZZILLI, WHERE'S ULTRA-MAX?

WHY? DON'T YOU KNOW?
NO, I MACCHK'S I DON'T.
ALL MY SOFTWARE ON IT IS GONE. I CAN'T FIND ANY TRACE OF MY WORK IN THE MAINFRAME. IT'S LIKE ULTRA-MAX HAS VANISHED.
WELL, THAT'S VERY ODD. I'LL GET SOME PEOPLE RIGHT ON THAT.
MR. MAZZILLI, DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME! YOU HIRED ME TO CREATE ULTRA-MAX BECAUSE YOU SAID IT WAS ON BEHALF OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT! THAT THEY WANTED TO USE IT AS A POTENTIAL WEAPON AGAINST HOSTILE GOVERNMENTS!
IF IT IS UNLEASHED, UN-SUPERVISED... ITS DESTRUCTIVE POWERS WOULD BE BEYOND BELIEF! IT'S THE MOST SOPHISTICATED COMPUTER VIRUS, EVER! IT'S TOO COMPLEX TO BE WIPED! ITS INSTINCT FOR SELF PRESERVATION SURPASSES ANYTHING THAT'S EVER BEEN DEVELOPED!
MAX, LISTEN. HERE AT AMPERSAND COMMUNICATIONS, WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE DOING. IF THE DISKS FOR ULTRA-MAX HAVE BEEN MISPLACED, WE'LL FIND THEM. I'M NOT TRYING TO "PLAY GAMES." I RESPECT YOU TOO MUCH FOR THAT.
GET BACK DOWN TO THE LAB AND DRAFT WHOMEVER YOU NEED. TURN THE PLACE UPSIDE DOWN. IT'S IN ALL OUR INTERESTS THAT YOU TURN UP YOUR WORK. SO GET OUT THERE AND DO IT!
O-OKAY, MR. MAZZILLI. YOU HAVEN'T LIED TO ME YET.
I'LL GET RIGHT ON IT.
GET ME SECURITY.
HEY! WHA--
WHAT'RE YOU--?!
EXIT
YOU DON'T WORK HERE ANYMORE.
MAZZILLI!!!
GOOD LAD


HE THINKS HE CAN DO WHATEVER HE WANTS.
BUT I'LL SHOW HIM. I'LL SHOW ALL OF THEM.
HUH?!
BUT FIRST YOU'LL SHOW US,
PUNISHER, MAY I INTRODUCE AN OLD FRIEND: MAXWELL EDWARD MUMMFORD. EXCEPT, BACK IN COLLEGE, ON A DARE, HE LEGALLY CHANGED HIS NAME TO MAX E. MUMM.
MAX WAS, AND IS, AN ABSOLUTE GENIUS. HAD ALL THE GREATEST TAKES ON METHODS OF SCREWING UP COMPUTER SYSTEMS.
HIS ONLY PROBLEM WAS ROD. SEEMS MAX HAS A WEAKNESS FOR NAMING PROGRAMS AFTER HIMSELF. A COMPUTER CRACKER NO-NO BUT MAX DID IT ANYWAY.
SAW YOUR NAME ATTACHED TO A RATHER NASTY PIECE OF WORK, SO WE FIGURED IT'D BE WORTH LOOKING YOU UP.
OH... MAX, THIS IS THE PUNISHER. COOPERATION IS SUGGESTED.

ARE YOU MR. SMITH?
THAT NAME'LL DO FOR THE MOMENT.
YOU PEOPLE ARE LATE.
DO YOU WANT TO TALK PUNCTUALITY, OR DO YOU WANT TO TALK MERCHANDISE?
GIMME THAT. I'LL DO IT MYSELF
THE MERCHANDISE BETTER BE UNDERNEATH THIS OR--
COFFEE
COFFEE
COFFEE
AH. BEAUTIFUL.
HEY?! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE!
COPS.
NOPE. NOT COPS
WE REPRESENT MR MAZZILLI, WHO IS EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN THE TRANSACTION IN PROGRESS HERE.
YOU TELL MAZZILLI THAT IF HE THINKS HE CAN MOVE IN ON FORTUNA'S TERRITORY--
--THEN HE CAN JUST KISS MY--
BLAM
ARRHH!

DOES ANYONE ELSE HAVE ANY OBJECTIONS TO OUR TAKING THE DRUGS OFF YOUR HANDS?
KRAKK
HEY!
SOMEONE'S SHOOTIN' OUT THE LIGHTS!
WHERE'S THAT COMIN' FROM?!
NIGHT GOGGLES ARE WORKING PERFECTLY. WITH THEM IN THE DARK, THIS WILL BE FISH-IN-A-BARREL.
I COULD GIVE THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO SURRENDER, I SUPPOSE.
BUT THEY MIGHT TAKE ME UP ON IT.

NO ONE'S THOUGHT TO LOOK UP HERE. THEY'RE STILL RUNNING AROUND LIKE HEADLESS CHICKENS
BLAM
BLAM
UH-OH
SEE ANY-THING?
NOPE. I THINK WE GOT HIM
OVER HERE! HE'S OVER HERE!
SNAP
TIME TO ABANDON CRATE.
I THINK YOU'RE WRONG.

DEAD WRONG
TEK
THERE ARE FEW THINGS MORE SATISFYING IN THIS WORLD THAN PLANNING AHEAD.

TYPICAL. A FEW OF THEM WERE LUCKY ENOUGH NOT TO BE STANDING WHERE I PLANTED THE EXPLOSIVES.
INSTEAD OF BEING GRATEFUL TO BE ALIVE. . THEY START SHOOTING AT ME, JUST BECAUSE I BLEW UP A FEW OF THEIR DIRTBAG BUDDIES.
THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH TODAY'S WORLD.
NO APPRECIATION.
GET 'EM!
GET WHO?!
GET ANYBODY WHO'S NOT US!
ARRRHHH!
SMITH! I THOUGHT THEY NAILED YOU!
THEY DID, BUT I ALWAYS WEAR KEVLAR UNDER MY SHIRT TO GET-TOGETHERS LIKE THIS.
THINK I'VE GOT A SPRAINED SHOULDER, THOUGH.
NOW GET US OUT OF HERE!!
BLAM

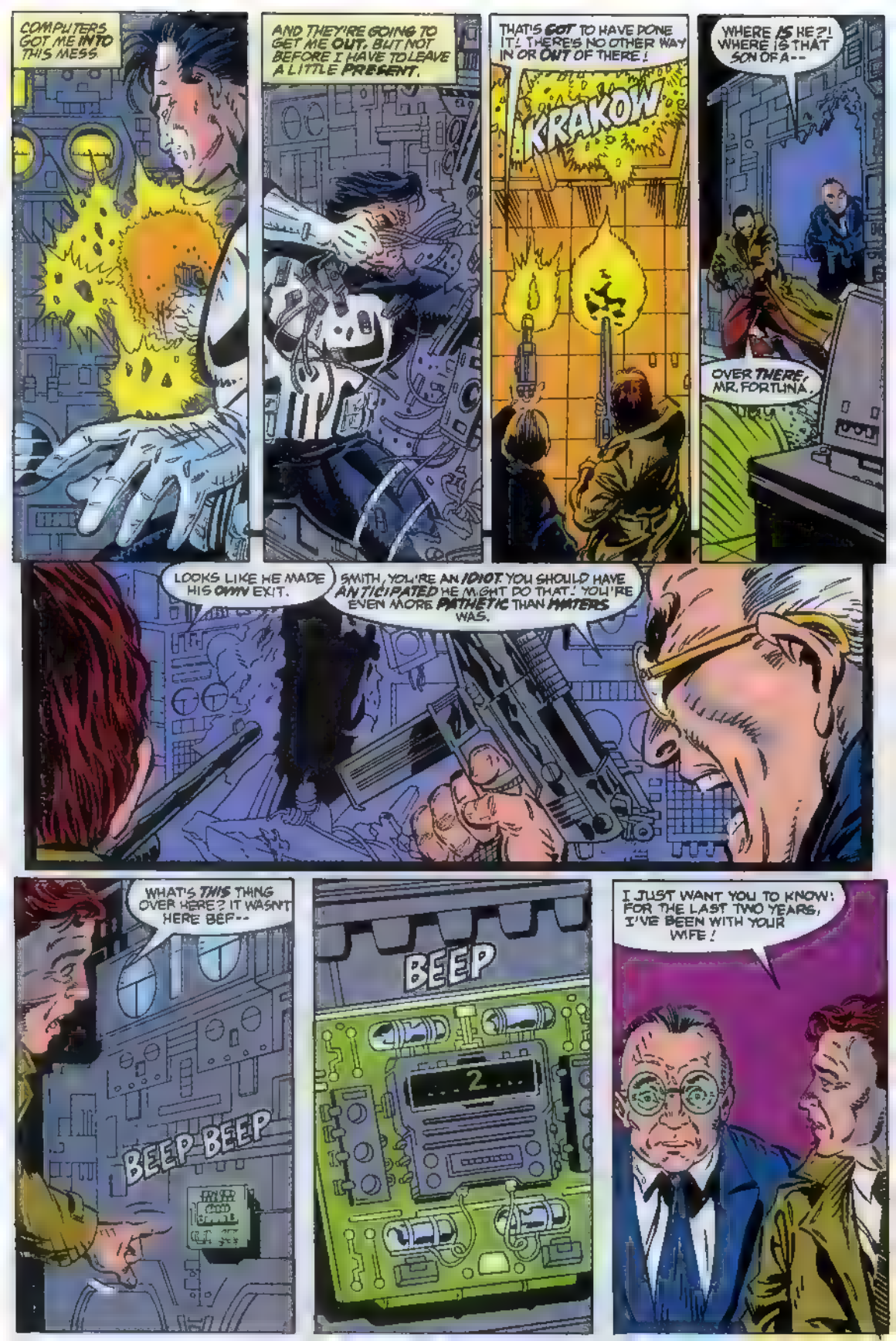
SO YOU THINK THEY DOWNLOADED ULTRA-MAX INTO THE SYSTEM OF THIS RAYCOM INDUSTRIES.
BACKDOOR CODE?
THAT'D BE MY GUESS.
OKAY, WE'RE IN TO RAYCOM. NOW LET'S SEE IF MY TRACER CODE DIGS UP--
BINGO.
HELLO, ULTRA-MAX.
HELLO MAX. HOW ABOUT A NICE GAME OF CHESS
CHESS?
IT'S AN IN-JOKE.
I THINK SO. BUT IF THEY'RE REALLY AS NASTY AN OUTFIT AS YOU'RE DESCRIBING... THEN MAYBE I SHOULDN'T.
IF ULTRA-MAX IS REALLY AS FORMIDABLE AS YOU SAY IT IS, THEN I DON'T SEE WHERE YOU HAVE MUCH CHOICE.
FORGET IT THEN. CAN YOU WIPE ULTRA-MAX FROM THEIR SYSTEM?
WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS, MAX
TRUE ENOUGH.
OKAY, THE DESTRUCT CODE'S ENTERED. ULTRA-MAX IS EATING ITSELF. WITHIN HALF AN HOUR IT SHOULD.
OHHH BOY.

OHHH BOY. FORTUNA'S NOT GOING TO BE HAPPY ABOUT THIS
NOT ONE BIT.
MR. FORTUNA... BAD NEWS. THE WHOLE DELIVERY FELL APART.
FIRST MAZZILLI'S PEOPLE SHOWED UP, AND THEN... I THINK IT WAS THE PUNISHER HE...
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! HOW THE BLAZES DID THEY KNOW?!
SOURCES
OOOOFF!
YOUR PAL HERE ISN'T DEAD, FORTUNA. I PREFER NOT TO SHOOT PEOPLE IN THE BACK.
YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE FACING ME
3

HAVE ME COLD, DON'T YOU, PUNISHER?
YOU ASSUME THAT I REACHED THIS POSITION IN LIFE BY LUCK. HAPPENSTANCE. NEVER ANTICIPATING ANY POSSIBILITIES
NEVER FIGURING I MIGHT HAVE SOME TRAINING OF MY OWN. THAT I MIGHT BE MORE THAN JUST YOUR AVERAGE DRUG-DEALING SLIME.
SO YOU'RE ABOVE-AVERAGE SLIME. SO WHAT?
SO THIS!
BLAAM

STUPID STUPID STUPID.
IF HE'D SHOT ME IN THE HEAD I'D PROBABLY STILL BE FINE, BECAUSE MY BRAIN IS SO BLASTED SMALL.
BLAMM
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
POK POK
HAVE SOME READING MATERIAL, PUNISHER!

DON'T JUST STAND THERE WITH A STUPID EXPRESSION, SMITH, HERE--
--MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL.
KEVLAR PROTECTED ME FROM SOME OF THE IMPACT..
...BUT MY CHEST IS STILL THROBBING.
MIGHT HAVE BUSTED A RIB.
THERE HE GOES
BLAM BLAM
COMPUTER ROOM. NO WAY OUT.
I'M GETTING SICK OF COMPUTERS. THEY REALLY BYTE.


COMPUTERS GOT ME INTO THIS MESS.
AND THEY'RE GOING TO GET ME OUT, BUT NOT BEFORE I HAVE TO LEAVE A LITTLE PRESENT.
THAT'S GOT TO HAVE DONE IT! THERE'S NO OTHER WAY IN OR OUT OF THERE!
KRAKOW
WHERE IS HE?! WHERE IS THAT SON OF A--
OVER THERE, MR. FORTUNA.
LOOKS LIKE HE MADE HIS OWN EXIT.
SMITH, YOU'RE AN IDIOT. YOU SHOULD HAVE ANTICIPATED HE MIGHT DO THAT. YOU'RE EVEN MORE PATHETIC THAN HATERS WAS.
WHAT'S THIS THING OVER HERE? IT WASN'T HERE BEF--
BEEP BEEP
BEEP
2
I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW: FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS, I'VE BEEN WITH YOUR WIFE!

RAKOVLAAM
THERMITE AT NIGHT..
GOOD GUYS' DELIGHT.

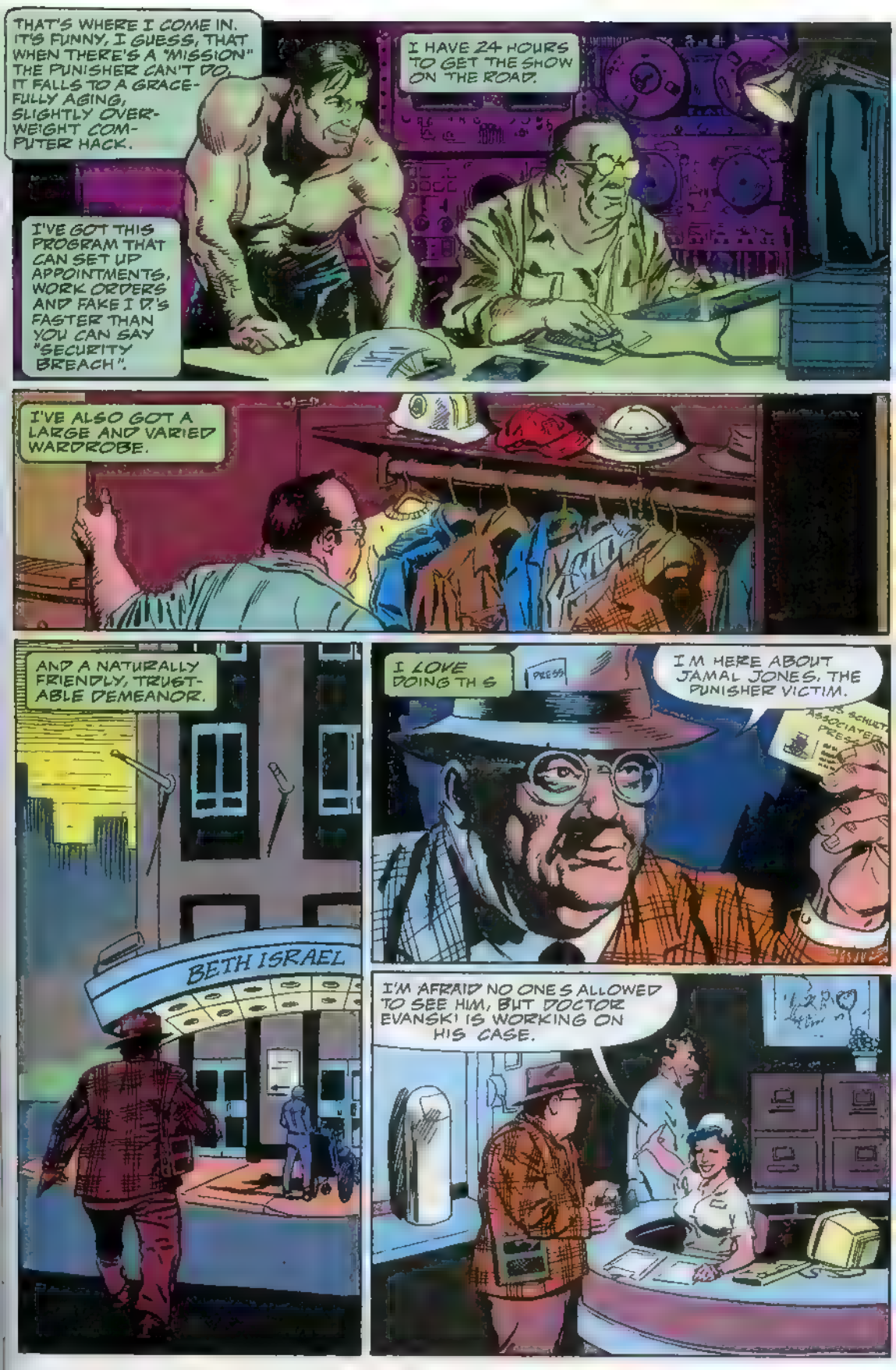
WHOA!!!
THE WHOLE SYSTEM WENT DEAD! WHAT THE HECK HAPPENED?!
I THINK FRANK DECIDED TO TAKE MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS.
H-HOLD IT!
YOU'RE NO COMPUTER REPAIR MAN.

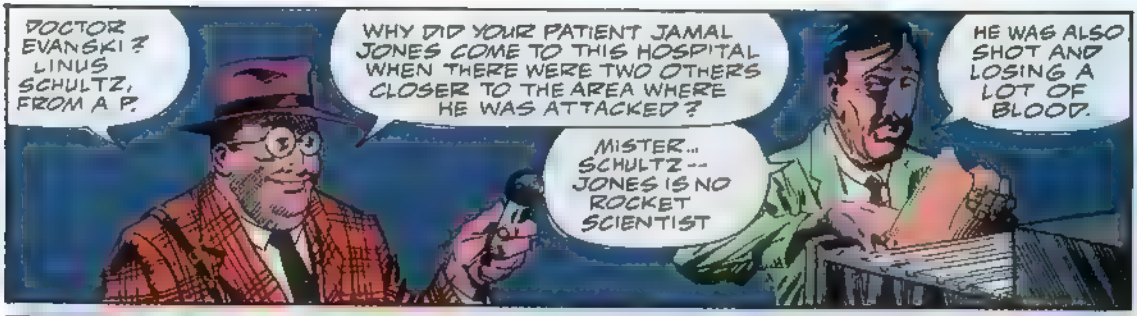
YOU'RE QUICK ON THE UPTAKE... YOU KNOW THAT, GRAMPS?
DON'T MOVE. I MEAN IT.
AIM THERE, YOU'LL JUST HIT THE BODY ARMOR.
HEAD'S A BETTER TARGET
SO WHAT'LL IT BE, GRAMPS? YOUR BIG OPPORTUNITY TO NAIL THE PUNISHER... THE GUY WHO JUST PUT PAIN TO YOUR DRUG-PUSHING BOSS.
GOING TO TAKE IT?
OH, @#$¢%! THIS.
I HAVEN'T GOT ALL NIGHT.
HERE.
THANKS
DON'T MENTION IT.

IT'S NOT GOING TO END HERE, CHIP. I WON'T REST UNTIL I GET ULTRA-MAX BACK IN MY HANDS.
YOU DO WHAT YOU GOTTA DO, MAX. BUT AT LEAST YOU KNOW ONE COPY OF THE VIRUS ISN'T GOING TO BE FLOATING AROUND ANYMORE.
NOT UNLESS IT MANAGED TO SWITCH ITSELF OVER TO SOME OTHER SYSTEM BEFORE FRANK TRASHED THE COMPUTER.
AND, MAX, OLD BUDDY, I DOUBT EVEN YOU COULD MAKE A VIRUS THAT SOPHISTI-CATED.

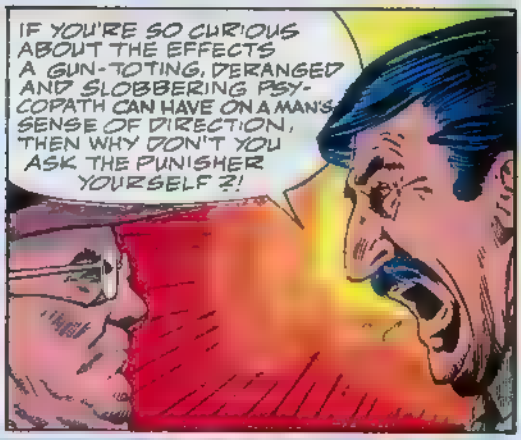
MICROCHIP IN: THE VENGEANCE ROUTINE
WRITER ROB TOKAR
PENCILER VINCE EVANS
INKER
LETTERER PHIL FELIX
COLORIST LINDA LESSMANN
EDITOR DON DALEY
EDITOR IN CHIEF TOM DEFALCO
MICRO
HAVE A GOOD DAY AT THE CRACK HOUSE, FRANK?
PLAYER 1 5150
100

NO
I NAILED THE LAB GUYS, BUT THE BAG MAN GOT AWAY BEFORE I COULD QUESTION HIM.
CHK!
I NEED YOU TO GET ON THE SYSTEM AND HACK UP SOME INFO ON HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS WITH GUNSHOT WOUNDS--
--TO THE LOWER ABDOMEN ALONG WITH A MILD CONCUSSION?
HIS NAME'S JAMAL JONES. CAUCASIAN, 27 YEARS OLD, BROWN EYES AND HAIR, HISTORY OF NARCOTICS ARRESTS...
THE NEWS?
COURTESY OF RINGLING BROTHERS.
SURVIVING YOUR...ENCOUNTER HAS GOTTEN JAMAL HIS 15 MINUTES OF FAME AND THEN SOME.
HE'S ALSO GOTTEN A TON OF POLICE PROTECTION. FRANK, I KNOW YOU WANNA FINISH THE JOB, BUT IF YOU GO IN THERE, EVEN IN DISGUISE, YOUR HEIGHT AND BUILD WILL GIVE YOU AWAY IN A SECOND...
BUT THERE IS ANOTHER WAY TO DEAL WITH MR. JONES...

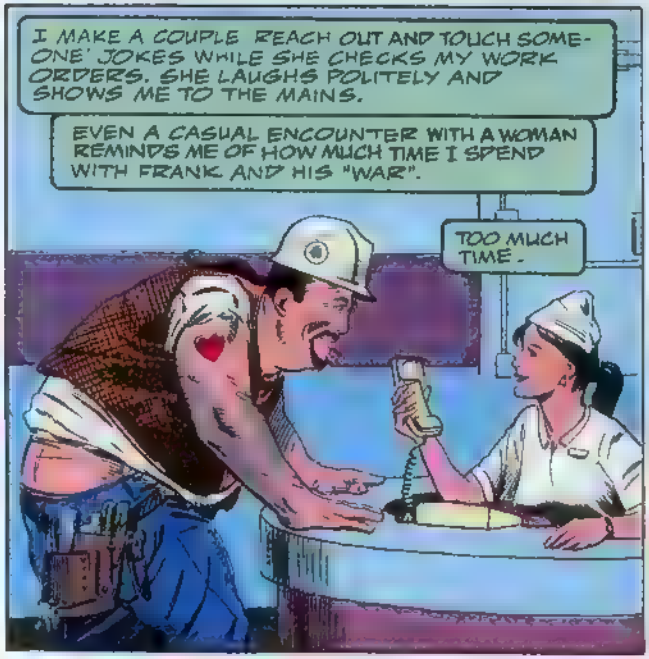

THAT'S WHERE I COME IN. IT'S FUNNY, I GUESS, THAT WHEN THERE'S A "MISSION" THE PUNISHER CAN'T DO, IT FALLS TO A GRACEFULLY AGING, SLIGHTLY OVERWEIGHT COMPUTER HACK.
I HAVE 24 HOURS TO GET THE SHOW ON THE ROAD.
I'VE GOT THIS PROGRAM THAT CAN SET UP APPOINTMENTS, WORK ORDERS AND FAKE I.D.'S FASTER THAN YOU CAN SAY "SECURITY BREACH".
I'VE ALSO GOT A LARGE AND VARIED WARDROBE.
AND A NATURALLY FRIENDLY, TRUSTABLE DEMEANOR.
BETH ISRAEL
I LOVE DOING TH S
PRESS
I'M HERE ABOUT JAMAL JONES, THE PUNISHER VICTIM.
I'M AFRAID NO ONE S ALLOWED TO SEE HIM, BUT DOCTOR EVANSKI IS WORKING ON HIS CASE.


DOCTOR EVANSKI? LINUS SCHULTZ, FROM A.P.
WHY DID YOUR PATIENT JAMAL JONES COME TO THIS HOSPITAL WHEN THERE WERE TWO OTHERS CLOSER TO THE AREA WHERE HE WAS ATTACKED?
MISTER... SCHULTZ-- JONES IS NO ROCKET SCIENTIST
HE WAS ALSO SHOT AND LOSING A LOT OF BLOOD.

AND I REALLY DON'T HAVE TIME FOR--
BUT DOCTOR, YOUR SCHEDULE IS--
ENOUGH!

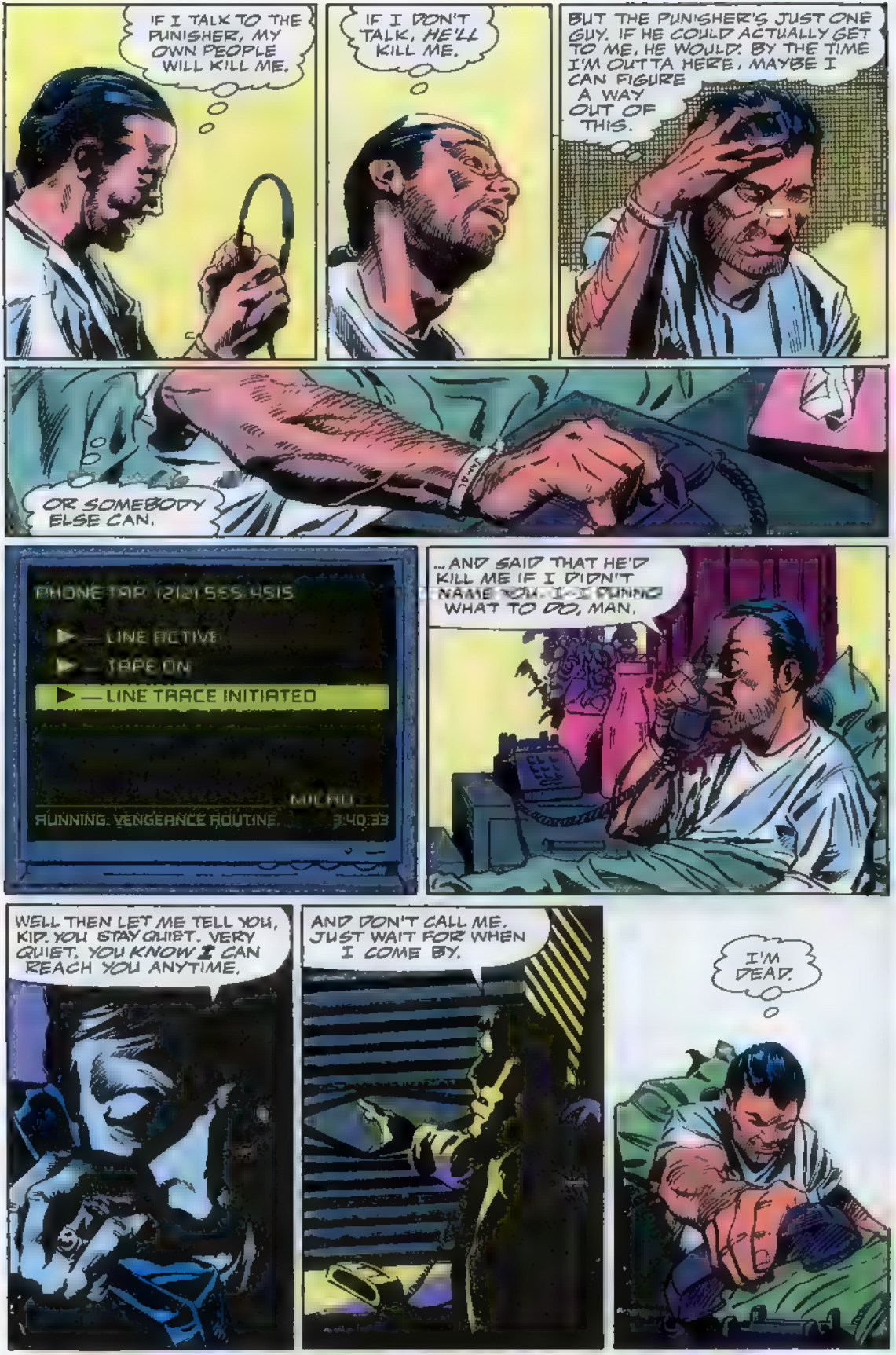

IF YOU'RE SO CURIOUS ABOUT THE EFFECTS A GUN-TOTING, DERANGED AND SLOBBERING PSYCOPATH CAN HAVE ON A MAN'S SENSE OF DIRECTION, THEN WHY DON'T YOU ASK THE PUNISHER YOURSELF?!

I DID
A BRIEF VISIT TO THE VAN, AND IT'S FUN TIME AGAIN.


I MAKE A COUPLE REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE' JOKES WHILE SHE CHECKS MY WORK ORDERS. SHE LAUGHS POLITELY AND SHOWS ME TO THE MAINS.
EVEN A CASUAL ENCOUNTER WITH A WOMAN REMINDS ME OF HOW MUCH TIME I SPEND WITH FRANK AND HIS "WAR".
TOO MUCH TIME.

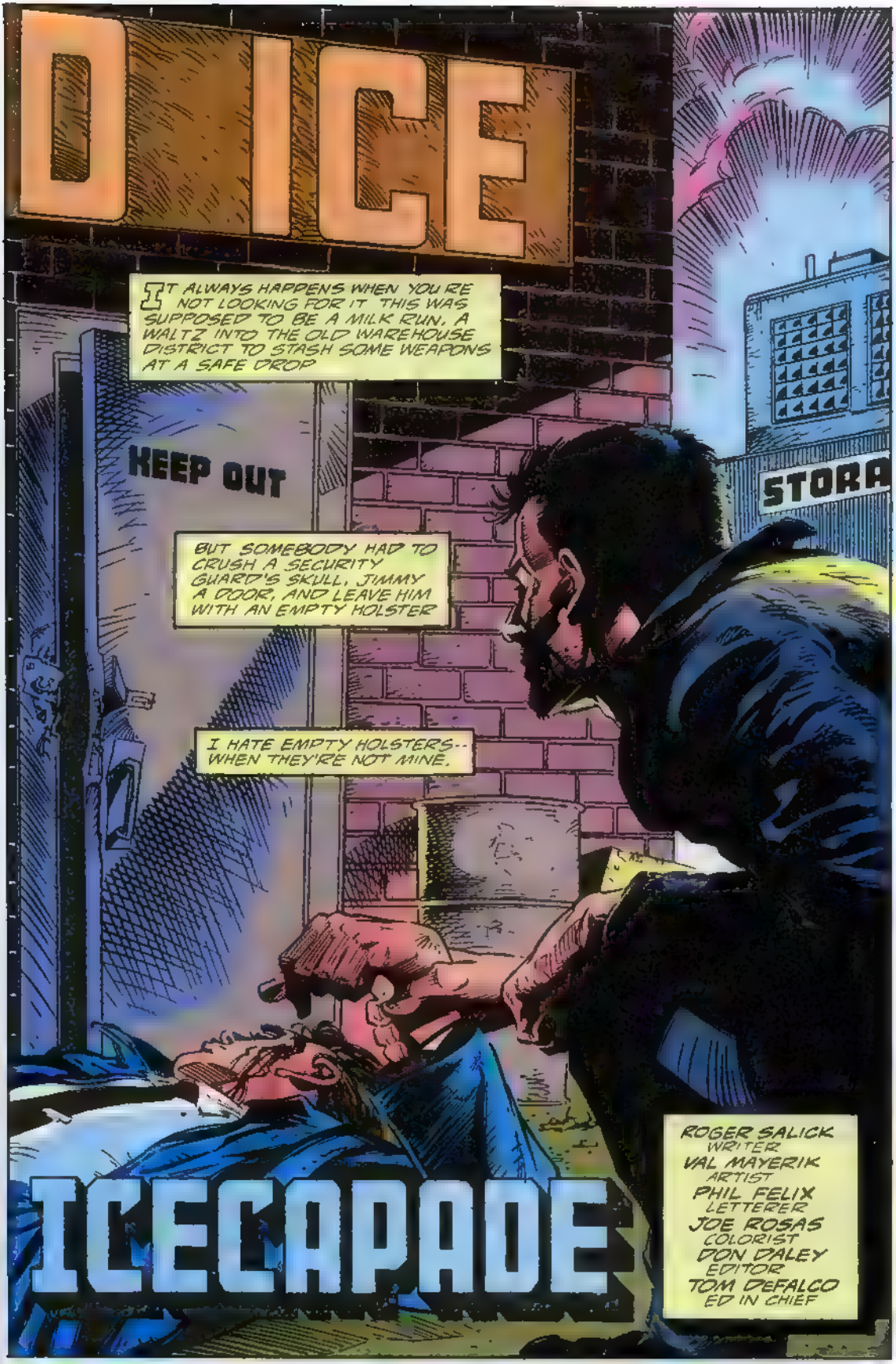
I SHUT OFF THE VIOLINS AND GET BACK TO WORK.

A QUICK CHANGE IN THE MEN'S ROOM AND IT'S UP TO THE ROOF.
I HOPE I GET TO DO THIS AGAIN SOMETIME--IT WAS A REAL TRICK WORKING OUT THE LOGISTICS.
NOW I'M A NETWORK OF TWO FOR AN AUDIENCE OF ONE.
SONY VCR
PLEASE USE HOSPITAL
TELEVISION HEADPHONES
THANK YOU
"HEADPHONES ONLY"?
WITH A SINGLE PHONE CALL, YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE.
YOUR LIFE. YOU--YES, YOU, JAMAL. YOU CAN LIVE BEYOND YOUR HOSPITAL STAY IF I GET YOUR CONNECTION'S NAME. REFUSE, AND YOU'LL JUST BE ONE MORE PIECE OF MEDICAL WASTE TO WASH UP IN JERSEY.
DIAL 555-LIFE. OPERATORS ARE STANDING BY
FRANK'S CLEANERS
♪♫♪!


IF I TALK TO THE PUNISHER, MY OWN PEOPLE WILL KILL ME.
IF I DON'T TALK, HE'LL KILL ME.
BUT THE PUNISHER'S JUST ONE GUY. IF HE COULD ACTUALLY GET TO ME, HE WOULD. BY THE TIME I'M OUTTA HERE, MAYBE I CAN FIGURE A WAY OUT OF THIS.
OR SOMEBODY ELSE CAN.
PHONE TAP: (212) 555-4515
— LINE ACTIVE
— TAPE ON
— LINE TRACE INITIATED
RUNNING: VENGEANCE ROUTINE
3:40:33
...AND SAID THAT HE'D KILL ME IF I DIDN'T NAME YOU. I--I DUNNO WHAT TO DO, MAN.
WELL THEN LET ME TELL YOU, KID. YOU STAY QUIET. VERY QUIET. YOU KNOW I CAN REACH YOU ANYTIME.
AND DON'T CALL ME. JUST WAIT FOR WHEN I COME BY.
I'M DEAD.

HOW'D IT GO, MICROMAN?
YOU OUGHTTA BE IN PICTURES, FRANK. LET ME CHECK THE MACHINE AND WE'LL SEE.
GUTH
GLIGK!
A HA!
...JUST WAIT FOR WHEN I COME BY.
ONLY ONE PERSON CAN SEE HIM. AND IT WAS AN INSIDE CALL--HIS DOCTOR'S HIS CONNECTION! I DON'T KNOW WHY EVANSKI'D BE MIXED UP WITH ILLEGAL DRUGS, BUT HE'S GOT THE PERFECT POSITION FOR DISTRIBUTION
THAT ALSO EXPLAINS WHY JAMAL CHOSE THAT HOSPITAL --AND WHY THE DOC WAS SO TOUCHY ABOUT IT.
AND WHY HE'S ABOUT TO END UP DEAD IN THE PARKING LOT.
DON'T WASTE YOUR AMMO, FRANK. WHILE I WAS ON, I HACKED INTO THE THE HOSPITAL'S SYSTEM AND CHANGED EVANSKI'S PRESCRIPTION FOR JAMAL. TO SOMETHING THAT WON'T KEEP HIM UP AT NIGHT OR DAY.
IT'S CALLED THE SUBTLE APPROACH.

...AND DR. EVANSKI WAS BROUGHT UP ON CHARGES OF MURDER AND NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. BUT THE STORY DOESN'T END THERE, PAUL--?
DOCTOR DEATH
@%#!
THANKS, KEITH. I'M AT THE COURTHOUSE WHERE DR STEPHAN EVANSKI WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN ARRAIGNED TODAY. HE NEVER MADE IT.
HE WAS GUNNED DOWN BY WHAT APPEAR TO BE HIS FORMER ASSOCIATES... APPARENTLY AS RETRIBUTION FOR THE MURDER OF JONES.
#@%¢
*#?@!!!
C'MON, FRANK, WE'RE ONLY ON LEVEL ONE! NO--MOVE TO THE--WATCH OUT FOR--!
ZAP
BEEP
BOOP
BEEP BEEP!
CHIPS
ARRRGH!
BLAM!
I'M GOING TO READ A BOOK!
SO MUCH FOR THE SUBTLE APPROACH.
END


DICE
IT ALWAYS HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE NOT LOOKING FOR IT. THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A MILK RUN, A WALTZ INTO THE OLD WAREHOUSE DISTRICT TO STASH SOME WEAPONS AT A SAFE DROP.
KEEP OUT
STORA
BUT SOMEBODY HAD TO CRUSH A SECURITY GUARD'S SKULL, JIMMY A DOOR, AND LEAVE HIM WITH AN EMPTY HOLSTER.
I HATE EMPTY HOLSTERS-- WHEN THEY'RE NOT MINE.
ICECAPADE
ROGER SALICK
WRITER
VAL MAYERIK
ARTIST
PHIL FELIX
LETTERER
JOE ROSAS
COLORIST
DON DALEY
EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO
ED IN CHIEF

SEEMS STRANGELY COLD IN HERE.
NO WONDER... THIS AN OLD-FASHIONED ICE HOUSE, A THROWBACK TO THE DAYS WHEN NEW YORK EXPORTED ICE AS FAR AWAY AS SOUTH AMERICA.
WHY WOULD ANYONE PUT A GUARD ON AN ICEHOUSE?
STANLEY KUBRICK MIGHT SHOOT A SCENE LIKE THIS IF HE HAD A REAL BAD HANGOVER. FOR A LONG MINUTE I CAN'T QUITE BELIEVE IT... THEN I REMEMBER THAT THE CITY'S BIG ICE FESTIVAL IS COMING UP...
HEY, WEEGEE, YOU UGLY MOTHER! GIMME THE SPRAY CAN!
HOLD YER SHORTS, I AIN'T DONE!
THESE PUNKS AREN'T CONTENT TO STICK TO MURDER AND MUGGING. THEY HAVE TO WRECK THE CITY'S PARTY.
THAT CUTS TWO WAYS
HI! I'LL HAVE A DIRTBAG ON THE ROCKS!
DEATH HAND
THE PUNISHER!

BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
WEEGEE'S GOT THE GUARD'S .38 AND A BAD CASE OF ADRENALINE FINGER. IT'S A PRETTY WIMPY GUN, BUT THE ICE IS MAKING IT LOOK LIKE A HOWITZER.
BAM!
THAT'S NUMBER SIX. LET ME SHOW YOU A REAL GUN, WEEGEE...
BLAMM!
I NEVER EVEN SEE THE LITTLE PIECE OF SCUM WITH THE CROWBAR COME UP BEHIND ME. HE TAKES ME RIGHT ACROSS THE NERVES ON THE FOREARM...
HEY, YOU GUYS! C'MERE! I GOT 'IM!

MY RIGHT HAND GOES DEAD, BUT IT'S NOT BUSTED. EITHER WAY, THIS GUY'S GROIN IS HANGING IN THE BREEZE AND HAS A RENDEZVOUS WITH MY OTHER HAND...
HUNGHH!
SHTOOK!
AIEEE!
MY EYES! HE BROKE MY STINKIN' EYES!
THAT MY BROTHER YOU JUS' BLINDED, MAN!
YOU MESS WI' MY BROTHER'S EYES, YOU GOT TO PAY, JACK.
THE ARM'S COMING BACK. GOOD...
TELL YOU WHAT, I'LL FIX HIM UP WITH A PAIR OF SUNGLASSES AND A CUP.
HE'S PUTTING TOO MUCH BODY INTO IT. HIS BALANCE IS OFF.
...AND PARRY IT..
MR. CROWBAR JUST SET HIMSELF UP FOR A COMBI-NATION I KNOW HE'S DYING TO SEE
CLANG!
CHUNK!
IF I CAN JUST BLOCK THIS SUCKER...
ANNGH!

YO, PUNISHER! I'M GONNA STICK THIS BUZZER SO FAR UP YOUR &#* IT'S GONNA JUMP START YOUR TICKER!
ZZZT ZZT!
AHH! AHH!
THERE'S MONEY ON HIS HEAD AND HE AIN'T GOT HIS GUN! THE TWO OF US CAN TAKE HIM!
YEAH! IF WE RUSH AT HIM AT THE SAME TIME.
ZZT!
MULTIPLE OPPONENTS GREEDY CAPITALISTS, TOO...
QUICK! GET 'IM WHILE HE'S... HOOOMF!
THUNK!
ZZT!
NEVER WAIT FOR THEM TO COME TO YOU. AND THERE'S A TANK BEHIND THE GUY WITH THE STUN GUN...
HE KEEPS A DEATH-GRIP ON THE ZAPPER AS HE GOES OVER THE EDGE IF HE'LL ONLY HOLD THAT POSE.
ZZT ZZZT!
THE TANK IS SUPER-COOLED BRINE FOR FREEZING CANS OF WATER IN... INCREDIBLY CONDUCTIVE. IF HE DOESN'T TURN TO TOAST FIRST, HE'LL DROWN.
AIIIEEEE!
ZZZZZT!

I'M GONNA GUT YOU FOR THAT
COME AND GET IT, BIG MAN
HE HOLDS HIS KNIFE HIGH. CHANCES ARE, HE CAN BE FAKED.
I NAIL HIM WITH A LOW KICK THAT DOESN'T COMMIT ME.
I START ANOTHER KICK. HE MOVES DOWN TO CUT ME...
...BUT I'M NOT THERE. I ROLL INTO A FAST ROUNDHOUSE THAT POUNDS HIS EAR.
THWAP!
OW!
THE NEXT TIME HE SEES THE SAME MOTION, HE'LL BUY IT.
COMPANY AT SIX O'CLOCK... SNEAKING THROUGH THE DOOR. PERFECT...
WHAM!
ARRGH!
AW, JEEZ, NO... PLEASE!
LEARNED THIS MOVE FROM A REALLY MEAN BOUNCER. HE HAD A LOT OF ONE-ARMED DRINKERS IN HIS BAR.
SNAP!

WHAP
A CAPITALIST AND A BACK-STABBER.. THIS JOKER BELONGS ON WALL STREET. I FEED HIM MY HEEL AND FEEL HIS TEETH CAVE IN.
LET ME OUTTA HERE, MAN! YOU BROKE MY ARM, MAN! I CAN FEEL THE BONES GRINDIN'!
CRASH!
WHAT THE--
NO! HEY, MAN! NO..
SCRUNCH!

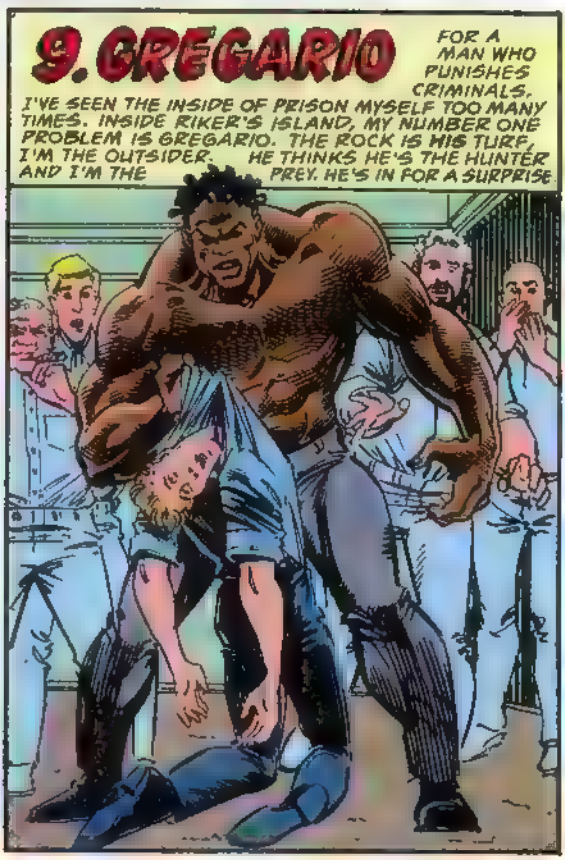
YOU BUTHDED MY THAW. WHATH I EVER DO TO YOU, HUH?
YOU WERE BORN. MY JOB IS TO FIX THAT
THERE'S ALMOST A COMIC APPEAL TO THIS ONE. HE'S LIKE THE WATCH THAT TAKES A LICKING AND KEEPS ON TICKING
HE'S PRETTY GOOD FOR A MAN IN PAIN. I WATCH HIS HANDS. IF HE SWITCHES HIS GRIP, THAT MEANS HE'S GOING TO QUIT SLICING AND DICING AND TRY FOR AN ANTHONY PERKINS
YUP. HERE IT COMES...
NINETY PERCENT OF THE FATAL KNIFE WOUNDS IN THE MORGUE ARE TO THE NECK AND UPPER CHEST THERE'S INCREDIBLE POWER ON THOSE OVERHEADS..
...ENOUGH TO STICK THE KNIFE INTO THE WOOD AND HOLD IT THERE...
WHOMP!
I HEAR THE CARTILAGE AROUND THE LARYNX GO. SOMEBODY ONCE DESCRIBED IT AS SOUNDING LIKE STEPPING ON A HORNET'S NEST, ONLY WETTER.

A COUPLE... MORE INCHES... HE'S GOIN'... DOWN...
BLAM! BLAM!
MY .45--AN UNMISTAKABLE SOUND. THE PUNK WITH THE TONGS IN HIM MUST BE ON SOMETHING. I THOUGHT HE WAS FINISHED...
NO COVER HERE. HAVE TO DIMINISH MY MASS, STAY LOW, AND MOVE...
THE ICE BLOCK...IF I CAN GET CLOSE, IT MIGHT DO MORE THAN JUST BLOCK HIS LINE OF FIRE...

DIRTY @#:!%! COME OUT AND TAKE A BULLET! I GOT ONE THAT SAYS "PUNISHER" ON IT!
THAT BLEEDING PIECE OF GARBAGE IS GOING TO SLIDE AROUND THAT ICE AND BLOW ME AWAY IN ABOUT TWO SECONDS IF I DON'T PULL THIS OFF...
I DON'T THINK ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE BLOCK. I DON'T AIM AT THE SURFACE.
I LOCK MY MIND ON A POINT DEEP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ICE...
HYAAA!
KRAAACK!
...I REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE ANYTHING BETWEEN ME AND THAT SPOT...
CRAAASH!
I TAKE MY GUN, AND LEAVE THE BODIES FOR THE MEDICAL EXAMINER. HE SHOULD APPRECIATE THIS...
...FOR ONCE, HE WON'T HAVE TO HOLD HIS NOSE

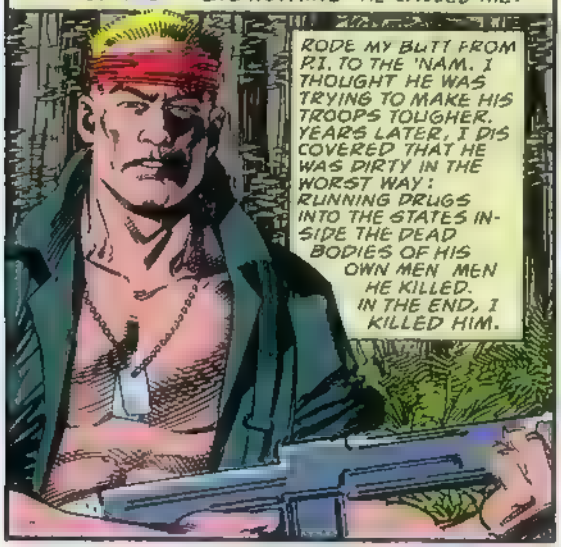
THE PUNISHER'S
TOP TEN VILLAINS!
MY OWN LIST OF TROUBLEMAKERS? LET'S JUST SAY IT'S GETTING SHORTER ALL THE TIME.
HOWEVER, SOME OF THEM SEEM TO KEEP COMING BACK, LIKE THE PAIN FROM AN OLD WOUND...

10. JIGSAW
USED TO BE A MOB BOSS WITH A PRETTY FACE. USED TO STRUT IN FRONT OF MIRRORS. SINCE HE CROSSED MY PATH, THE ONLY MIRRORS HE SEES ARE CRACKED ONES. I KILLED HIM ONCE, HE CAME BACK AND HE WON'T STOP UNTIL HE DOES THE SAME TO ME.


9. GREGARIO
FOR A MAN WHO PUNISHES CRIMINALS, I'VE SEEN THE INSIDE OF PRISON MYSELF TOO MANY TIMES. INSIDE RIKER'S ISLAND, MY NUMBER ONE PROBLEM IS GREGARIO. THE ROCK IS HIS TURF, I'M THE OUTSIDER. HE THINKS HE'S THE HUNTER AND I'M THE PREY. HE'S IN FOR A SURPRISE

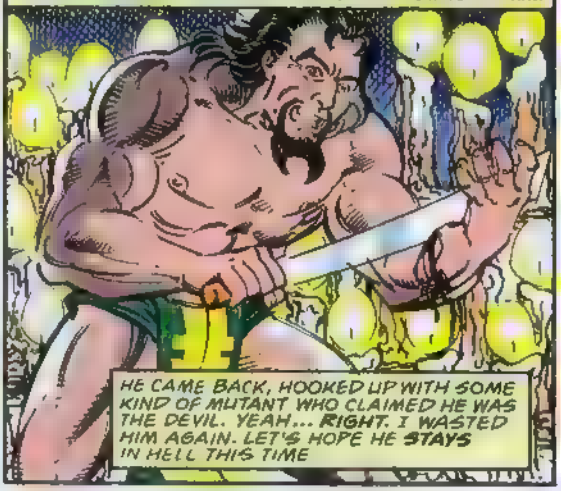
8. SGT. CLEVE CORMAN

MY DRILL INSTRUCTOR ON PARRIS ISLAND. SAID I WAS **NOTHING**. "**BIG NOTHING**" HE CALLED ME.



7. THE REV

THE RIGHT HONORABLE REVEREND SAMMY SMITH. I HOOKED UP WITH HIS CHURCH OF THE SAVED TO BRING ITS CRIMINAL OPERATIONS DOWN. I WAS SHOT... **DYING**... HE TOUCHED ME, **HEALED** ME. DID SOMETHING TO MY HEAD I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND. IN THE END, I PUT A BULLET IN HIM.



HE CAME BACK, HOOKED UP WITH SOME KIND OF MUTANT WHO CLAIMED HE WAS THE DEVIL. YEAH... **RIGHT**. I WASTED HIM AGAIN. LET'S HOPE HE **STAYS** IN HELL THIS TIME

6. SPIDER-MAN

"VILLAIN" IS A FUNNY WORD FOR ME TO USE. I'VE ONLY GOT TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD THOSE WHO HELP ME AND THOSE WHO CAN'T... **OR WON'T**. THE WALL CRAWLER FALLS INTO THE LATTER GROUP.

ALL THAT POWER. HIS HEART'S IN THE RIGHT PLACE, BUT HE'S **WAY** TOO SOFT TO DEAL WITH THE SCUM ON THE STREETS, AND HE KEEPS ON GETTING IN MY WAY.

5. DAREDEVIL

AND WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT OF BLEEDING HEARTS, THE WORST OF THE BUNCH IS THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR. ONE TIME HE PUT A BULLET IN ME TO STOP ME FROM WASTING A CREEP WHO SOLD DRUGS TO CHILDREN **CHILDREN**.

HE'S FOUGHT CRIMINALS, HE KNOWS WHAT THEY ARE. WHY CAN'T HE SEE THAT MY WAY IS THE RIGHT WAY? HE BETTER STAY OUT OF MY WAY

4. THE REAVERS

NORMALLY, I FIGHT HUMAN CRIMINALS. YOU SHOOT THEM, YOU STAB THEM, THEY DIE. SIMPLE, RIGHT? THIS BUNCH HAS GONE TOE TO TOE WITH THE X-MEN. THEY'RE CYBORGS. THE BOOK SAYS THEY CAN'T BE KILLED. I'LL HAVE TO TEST THAT SOMEDAY.

MICRO SAID HE'D HEARD THROUGH THE CYBER-NET GRAPE-VINE THAT THEY'D BEEN KILLED BY GIANT ROBOTS CALLED SENTINELS. I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE IT.

3. SARACEN

MERCENARY, ASSASSIN, INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST. THE BEST THERE IS, FOR SALE TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. TIME AND TIME AGAIN HE CROSSES MY PATH. TIME AND TIME AGAIN HE ESCAPES ME. HE KILLED MY UNCLE ROCCO. FOR THAT HE'S GOING TO DIE.

SOMEDAY

2. THE KINGPIN OF CRIME

WILSON FISK. THE BLOODY PHARAOH SITTING ATOP THE WHOLE FILTHY PYRAMID OF ORGANIZED CRIME. I'VE JUST HEARD THAT DAREDEVIL BROUGHT HIM DOWN. IF IT'S TRUE, SCORE ONE FOR THE BLEEDING HEARTS MYSELF. IF IT'S NOT TRUE, I'LL KILL HIM THE FAT MAN OWES ME... BIG TIME.

1. BRUNO COSTA, SKINNER, KOLSKY

ONE SUNDAY IN THE PARK, A HUNDRED LIFETIMES AGO... THEY KILLED MY WIFE AND KIDS. THEY MADE ME WHAT I AM TODAY. IF I HAVE ONE REGRET IN MY LIFE AS THE PUNISHER, IT'S THAT I WASN'T THE ONE THAT KILLED THEM. STILL... DEAD IS DEAD.

KEVIN HOBBOLD AND Ken Branch

Costumed Vigilante
Above or Against the Law?
Exhibit D
LINE DO NOT CROSS

Roderick Delgado '91
AND
KEN BRANCH